

SUSPENSION OF ALL PROHIBITIONS AGAINST THE  
MARRIAGE OF OFFICERS

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MARCH 23 (legislative day, MARCH 5), 1942.—Ordered to be printed

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Mr. GURNEY, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

## REPORT

[To accompany S. 2380]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2380) to suspend for the duration of the present war all prohibitions against the marriage of officers of the land and naval forces of the United States, having considered the same, submit the following report thereon, with the recommendation that it do pass with the following amendment:

In line 6, insert after the word "engaged" the words "or six months thereafter".

The Secretary of War may under the provisions of the act of July 25, 1939 (53 Stat. 1074), on and after July 1, 1942, revoke the commission of any officer of the Regular Army who marries within 1 year subsequent to the date of his original commission. Similar restrictions of law exist against the marriage of officers of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

The purpose of this legislation is to remove such restrictions and to permit officers of the armed services to marry at any time during the war in which the United States is now engaged or 6 months thereafter. Your committee are of the opinion that the ordinary economic conditions which make it undesirable to permit an officer to marry within 1 year of his original commission during times of peace, do not exist at the present time. In time of peace, it is not unreasonable to require a couple to delay their marriage for the period of a year. In time of war, however, it is the rule rather than the exception that a couple will be separated, many times forever, in less than 1 year after the man is commissioned an officer of the armed services. Under such circumstances, it is felt that any restraint upon the marriage of the officer concerned is unreasonable.

Attention is invited to the following letter from the Secretary of War in which it is stated that the War Department offers no objection to the enactment of this legislation. Your committee do not agree with the view of the Secretary of War that legislation to accomplish the desired purpose is unnecessary. It is believed that a matter as essential to the morale of the Nation as is this legislation should not be left to the discretion of the Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, March 19, 1942.

HON. ROBERT R. REYNOLDS,  
*Chairman, Committee on Military Affairs,  
United States Senate.*

DEAR SENATOR REYNOLDS: The War Department offers no objection to the enactment of S. 2380, a bill to suspend for the duration of the present war all prohibitions against the marriage of officers of the land and naval forces of the United States.

The effect of this bill, as far as it pertains to the Army, would be to suspend for the duration of the wars in which the United States is now engaged, so much of the act of July 25, 1939 (53 Stat. 1074), as authorizes the Secretary of War, on and after July 1, 1942, to revoke the commission of any officer of the Regular Army who marries within 1 year subsequent to the date of his original commission.

It should be noted that the provisions of the act of July 25, 1939, do not make the revocation of an officer's commission mandatory because of marriage, but merely give the Secretary of War the discretionary power to revoke commissions for that cause. The War Department has no intention, in view of the existing shortage of officers under war conditions, of revoking the commission of any Regular Army officer solely because he marries within 1 year subsequent to the date of his original commission.

The War Department believes that, in time of peace, the pay and allowances of a newly appointed second lieutenant do not justify the assumption of the financial burden of marriage, and that under peace conditions his value to the Government as an officer is lessened when his mind is occupied with the problems of supporting a wife. On the other hand, under war conditions, when persons of that age and status are subject to military service as enlisted men and when a shortage of officers exists, there would obviously be no justification for discharging a qualified officer solely because of marriage.

While this Department offers no objection to the enactment of S. 2380, it is believed that legislative action is not required to accomplish the purpose intended.

Time has not permitted the submission of this report to the Bureau of the Budget. It therefore involves no commitment as to the relationship of the proposed legislation to the program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON,  
*Secretary of War.*

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